



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Tom Saunders

200 W. WASHINGTON STREET • INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

2009 Legislative Wrap-Up

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE TOM SAUNDERS
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What important issues are facing our community today, in your opinion?

Please feel free to e-mail me your thoughts to h54@iga.in.gov, post your comments on my Web site at www.in.gov/h54, or return this card with your comments below.

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Taxpayers are Winners in New State Budget

I believe the new state budget, based on solid common-sense principles, is a success for Hoosier taxpayers and public education.

Although the budget is a bipartisan compromise, our principles remained an important influence. It is a success, I believe, because:

- It contains no general tax increases.
- It maintains at least \$1 billion in state reserves.
- It uses one-time federal stimulus money responsibly, including statewide infrastructure and university construction projects.
- It does not deplete trust funds or other dedicated money for operating expenses.

The House and Senate Republicans outlined those standards early in the process and did not waver. While many states are cutting overall education spending, raising taxes or both, this budget does neither. It even promises more support for education through additional funding. The "education trigger" would also allot 50 percent of state revenue to education when income exceeds revenue projections.

Statewide public education receives what I believe is solid support:

- K-12 education gained an average increase of 1.1 percent in calendar year 2010 and 0.3 percent in calendar year 2011.
- The Ivy Tech Community College network was given enhanced support, and bonding is authorized to fund 38 university capital projects throughout the state, including Indiana University Southeast, Purdue University and Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.
- The state's higher education scholarship grants program receives increases of 6 percent in fiscal year 2010 and 3 percent in fiscal year 2011.

I believe this is the right budget for Indiana right now, and that's why I voted for it.



Rep. Saunders speaking to a school tour group.



Rep. Phil Hinkle and Rep. Saunders discussing legislation.

The Children's Home

As soon as the special session adjourned, I began receiving phone calls asking me why I supported a budget that didn't include funding for the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home. Although I was disappointed with the budget, I voted "Yes" because I believe it was the best option for House District 54 and the families across Indiana. Since then, I have worked with other legislators on a program to track students from the Home to ensure their safety and well-being in their home community.

I want to personally thank all the students, staff and supporters for all of their hard work and dedication to the Home. I also would like to thank the American Legion for their support and for presenting me with their highest honor, the Distinguished Public Service Award.

Displaying Traffic Signs

I have also continued my efforts with the Indiana Department of Transportation to get adequate signage along the intersections of State Road 3

and U.S. 40 in Henry County to improve safety in the area. INDOT has promised to properly display the much-needed signs in the near future.

Honoring Our Veterans

This session, we were able to honor our Hoosier heroes who have sacrificed so much for us by granting all Hoosier Purple Heart recipients free tuition to state colleges and universities. Previously, the law only provided tuition to those who received the Purple Heart after Sept. 10, 2001, and the children of all Purple Heart recipients.

Helping our Military Families

This session, access to the Military Family Relief Fund was expanded to provide education and employment assistance to all active-duty personnel and not just those in the National Guard or reserves. This law should give military families peace of mind during a stressful time, when family members are serving overseas.



Tom Saunders

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Important Contact Information for Representative Tom Saunders

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